

# Calmer Classrooms: Working with Traumatized Students



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Region 3 Behavioral Health Services &  
The Behavioral Health Education Center of NE (BHECN)  
Beyond Consequences Institute (BCI)  
Help for Billy-Heather Forbes  
The Zones of Regulation-Leah Kuypers

# Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska

## *Our Mission:*

*To enhance the behavioral health of the people of Nebraska by improving the numbers, accessibility and competence of the Nebraska Behavioral Health Workforce through the collaboration of academic institutions, providers, governmental agencies and the community.*

**BHECN** | BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
EDUCATION CENTER  
OF NEBRASKA

Nebraska  
Medical Center

Creighton  
UNIVERSITY

Nebraska  
Kearney

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# Take Care of Self



# Agenda/Overview

- Introductions
- Defining Trauma
- Trauma and Children
- ACE's
- Regulation
- Classroom Strategies
- Self Care
- Resources & Evaluation



# Trauma Definition

Trauma occurs when an external threat overwhelms a person's internal and external positive coping resources

## Traumatic Events

- Single Event
- Enduring, Ongoing (complex)

-SAMHSA

# Possible Traumatic Childhood Events

- Separation from a parent
- Disruptive home life
- Medical procedures and/or serious illness
- Unmet needs
- Mother with post-partum depression
- Poverty
- Lack of a stimulating environment
- Racial Discrimination
- Sexual, physical, or verbal abuse
- Divorce
- Neglect
- Bullying (including from siblings)
- Absence of consistent rules and boundaries
- Parent's emotional rigidity
- Domestic fighting or violence
- Witnessing community and televised violence
- Parent's failure to praise and encourage
- Frequent moves
- Single-parent households
- Two-parent working households
- Multiple Siblings
- Poor nutrition
- Foster care
- Adoption
- Car accidents
- Deaths in the family
- Parent's failure to express affection
- Depressed parent
- Absent parent
- Un-attuned parent
- Overwhelmed parent
- Sanctuary Trauma

# Still Face Experiment

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZhto>

-Still Face Video

# Trauma and Academics

It's like playing chess in a hurricane

- Hypervigilance
- Hyperactivity and impulsivity
- Difficulty regulating emotion
- Difficulty paying attention
- Defiance
- Aggression
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism



# Trauma is often Overlooked because...

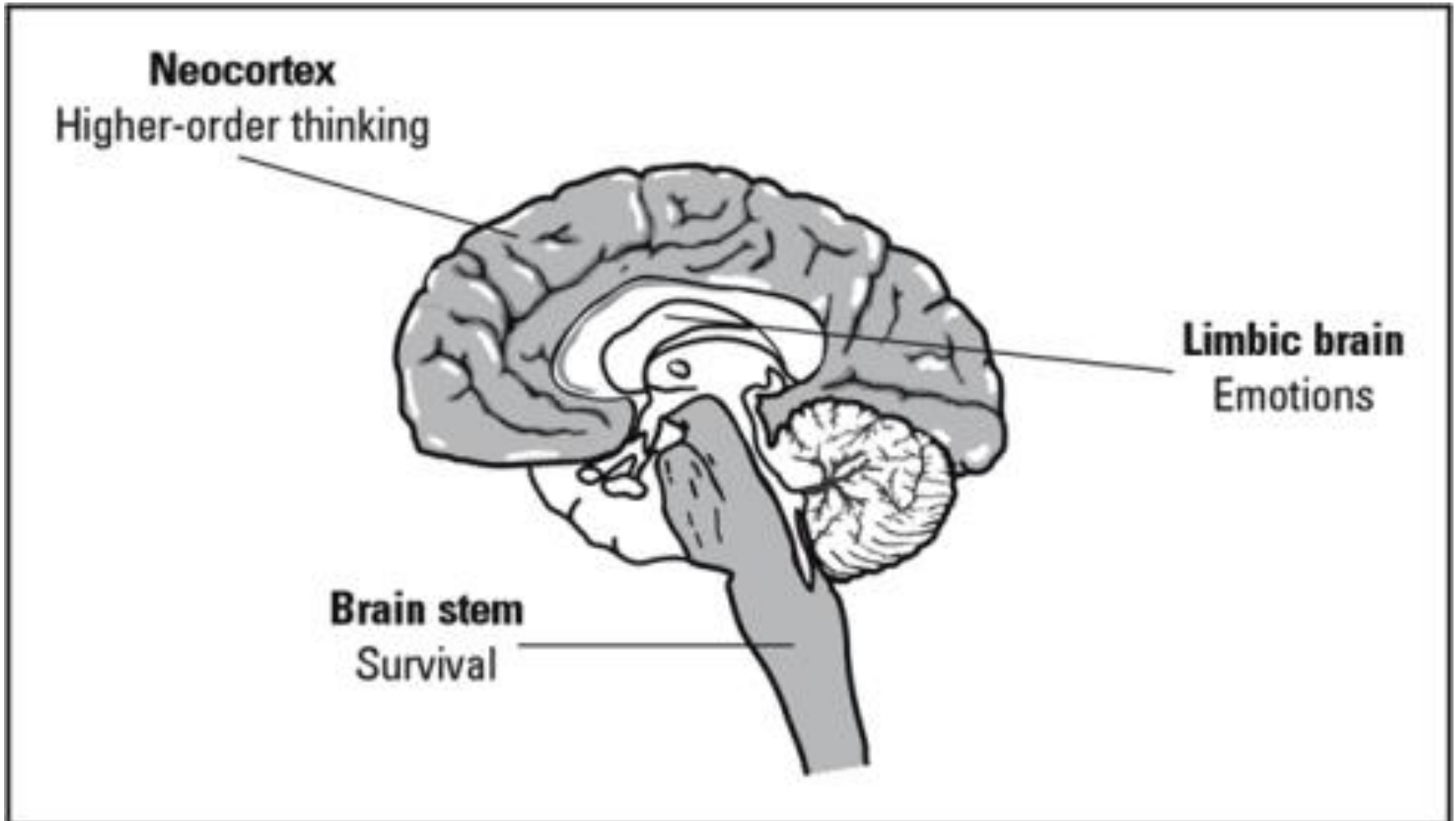
- Behavioral responses resemble common delinquent behaviors and are under-identified as trauma symptoms
- Stress manifestation is different by ages, stages, expression
- Many just don't connect the symptoms to trauma

...Thus leading to punishment rather than help

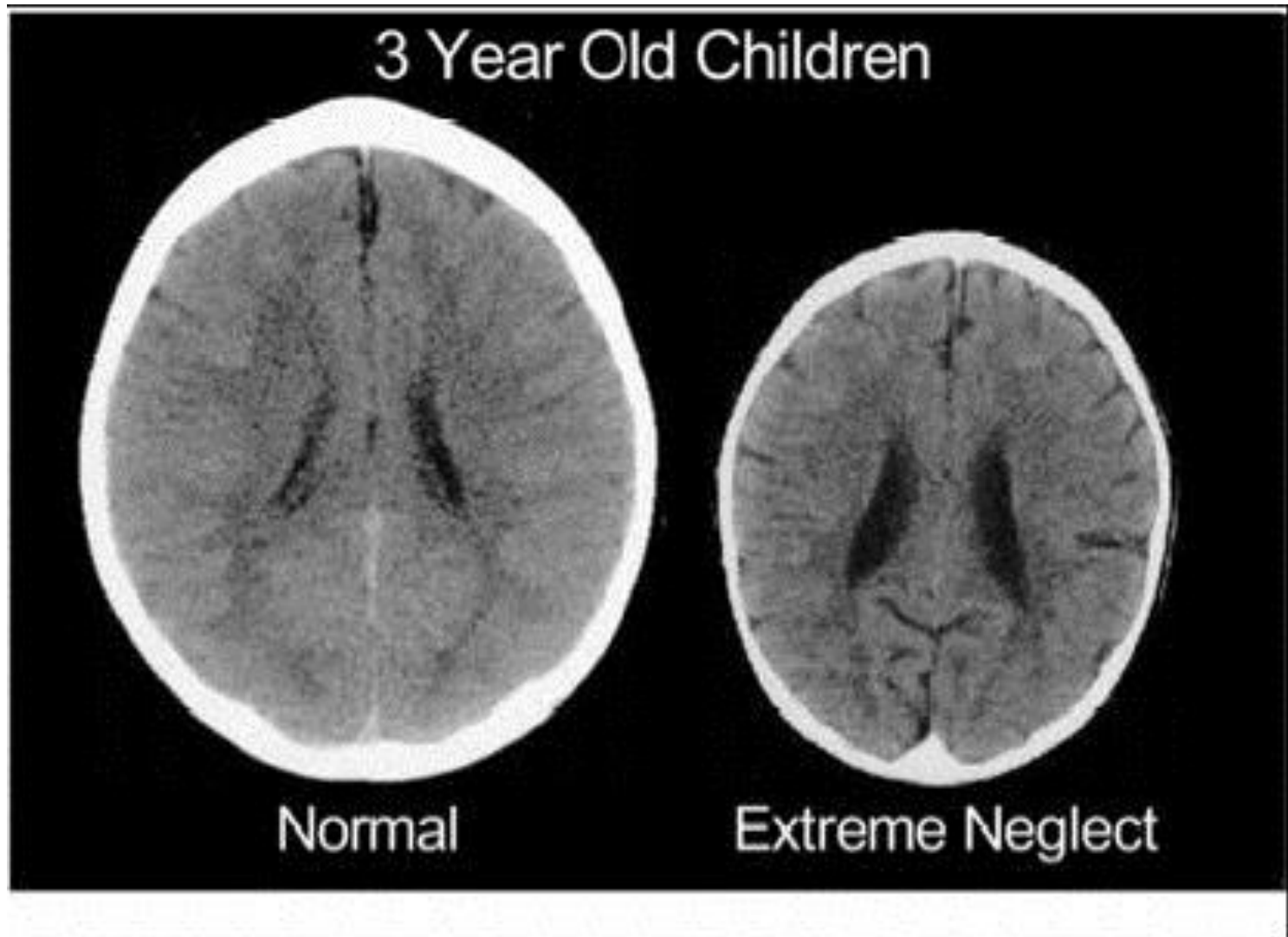
# How Brains Are Built Video



# The Brain, Body, Mind



# Trauma and the Brain



# Screen Time



-screen time video

# Discussion Question

Based on this first section of the training, we have discussed the definition of trauma, childhood trauma, brain development, and serve and return.

**What are some takeaways from this section?**

# **Wrong Question...**

How Do I Get Billy To Change His  
Behavior?

**TO**

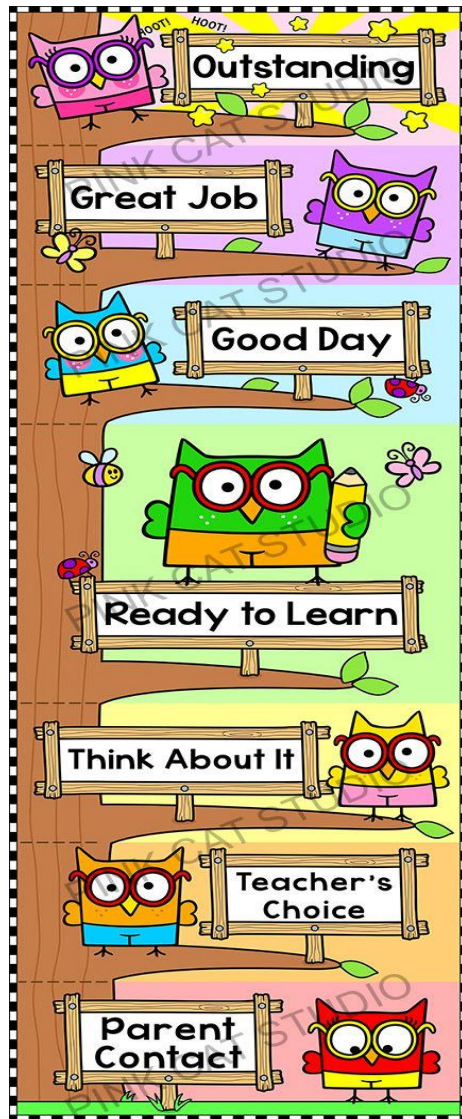
**What is Driving Billy's Behavior?**

What can I do at this very moment to  
improve my relationship with the  
student?

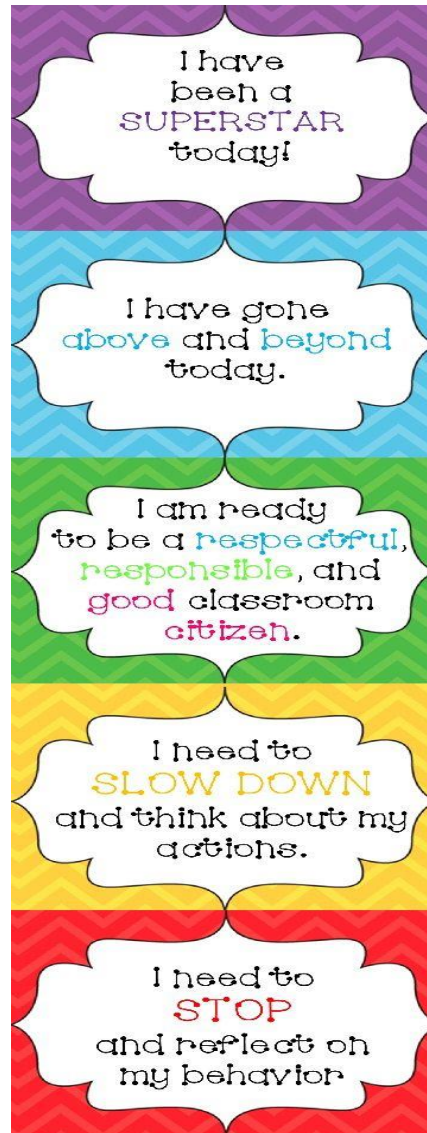
-BCI



# Understanding Behavior



www.pinkcatstudio.com





Collaboration between Kaiser Permanente's Department of Preventive Medicine in San Diego and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

# **The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)**



# ACE SURVEY

## Survey is in your packet



-ACE Video

# Resilience

“Even when people score high on ACE’s it doesn’t mean this is determinate of their life course. What doesn’t get accounted for in the ACE score is the concept of resilience; building resilience is a solution to adverse childhood experiences.”

Jane Isaacs Lowe

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Adverse Childhood Experiences*	Impact of Trauma and Health Risk Behaviors to Ease the Pain	Long-Term Consequences of Unaddressed Trauma (ACEs)
<p><b><i>Abuse of Child</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recurrent Severe Emotional abuse</li> <li>▶ Recurrent Physical abuse</li> <li>▶ Contact Sexual abuse</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Trauma in Child’s Household Environment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Substance abuse</li> <li>▶ Parental separation or divorce -</li> <li>▶ Chronically depressed, emotionally disturbed or suicidal household member</li> <li>▶ Mother treated violently</li> <li>▶ Imprisoned household member</li> <li>▶ Loss of parent – (best by death, unless suicide, - worst by abandonment)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Neglect of Child</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Abandonment</li> <li>▶ Child’s basic physical and/or emotional needs unmet</li> </ul> <p>* Above types of ACEs are the “heavy end” of abuse.</p>	<p><b><i>Neurobiologic Effects of Trauma</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Disrupted neuro-development</li> <li>▶ Difficulty controlling anger-rage</li> <li>▶ Hallucinations</li> <li>▶ Depression</li> <li>▶ Panic reactions</li> <li>▶ Anxiety</li> <li>▶ Multiple (6+) somatic problems</li> <li>▶ Sleep problems</li> <li>▶ Impaired memory</li> <li>▶ Flashbacks</li> <li>▶ Dissociation</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Health Risk Behaviors</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Smoking</li> <li>▶ Severe obesity</li> <li>▶ Physical inactivity</li> <li>▶ Suicide attempts</li> <li>▶ Alcoholism</li> <li>▶ Drug abuse</li> <li>▶ 50+ sex partners</li> <li>▶ Repetition of original trauma</li> <li>▶ Self Injury</li> <li>▶ Eating disorders</li> <li>▶ Perpetrate interpersonal violence</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Disease and Disability</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ischemic heart disease</li> <li>▶ Cancer</li> <li>▶ Chronic lung disease</li> <li>▶ Chronic emphysema</li> <li>▶ Asthma</li> <li>▶ Liver disease</li> <li>▶ Skeletal fractures</li> <li>▶ Poor self rated health</li> <li>▶ Sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>▶ HIV/AIDS</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Social Problems</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Homelessness</li> <li>▶ Prostitution</li> <li>▶ Delinquency, violence, criminal behavior</li> <li>▶ Inability to sustain employment</li> <li>▶ Re-victimization: rape, DV</li> <li>▶ compromised ability to parent</li> <li>▶ Intergenerational transmission of abuse</li> <li>▶ Long-term use of health, behavioral health, correctional, and social services</li> </ul>

# Nebraska ACE Data, 2011

- BRFSS- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- 53% of Nebraskans have experienced at least one ACE
- Approximately 12% of Nebraskans reported experiencing 3-4 ACEs
- Approximately 9% of Nebraskans reported experiencing 5 or more ACEs

# ACE Score Increases Suicide Attempt



1 of 100 people with 0 ACEs attempt suicide



10 of 100 people with 3 ACEs attempt suicide



20 of 100 people with 7 ACEs attempt suicide

# **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)**

# **Prevalence of Trauma in Students**

**13 of every 30 students in  
a classroom will have toxic  
stress from 3 or more  
Adverse Childhood  
Experiences (ACEs)**



# ACE PREVALENCE IN NEBRASKA CLASSROOM



Adapted from Laura Porter,  
Washington State Family  
Policy Council, Kathy Carson,  
Public Health-Seattle & King  
County

# ACE & School Performance

## Trauma Sensitive Schools

### Traumatized children are:

- 2.5 x more likely to fail a grade in school
- score lower on standardized tests
- Are suspended & expelled more often
- More frequently placed in special education

### Trauma Sensitive Schools:

- National Council of Behavioral Health 7 Domains of Trauma Sensitive Schools Assessment

# Video



-Healing Neen Video

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- **1. What could have happened differently for Tonier at any point along the way?**
- **2. Have you ever met a “Neen” in your work?**
- **3. What are the things you would like to do differently as we move forward with trauma informed care in mind?**
-

# Trauma Informed Shift in Perspective

**What is  
Wrong  
With This  
Child?**



**What  
Happened  
To This  
Child?**

# **Ideas For Safe Classrooms**

- **Create A Sense of Belonging**
- **Create classrooms designed for regulation**
- **Develop Relationships**
- **Involve Parental Support, Not Parental Fear**

# Ideas For A Safe Classroom

## Create A Sense of Belonging



# Create a Sense of Belonging

- Take time to talk and acknowledge each student. When the student walks into the classroom, convey the message, “Welcome. This class would not be the same with you here today!”
- Recognize that students moods and help to regulate instead of ignoring or criticizing the moods.
- Smile at the students and stay in a warm place in your heart, no matter their attitude or disposition.
- Take an interest in what’s important to each student.
- Ask the students for help and let the students help.
- “You are one of us” vs. “You’re not one of us”



**Regulation:** The ability to experience and maintain stress within ones window of tolerance. Being calm, focused or relaxed

**Dsyregulation:** The experience of stress outside ones window of tolerance. Stressed out or in a state of distress.

# Dysregulation vs. Regulation

## Dysregulation

### Hyper-Arousal

- Unable to focus or sit still
- Will not adhere to rules
- Aggressive
- Anxious before tests
- Impulsive

### Hypo-Arousal

- Defiant
- Withdraws from peers
- Tardy
- Absent
- Avoids Tasks
- Forgetful

## Regulation

- Responsive
- Engaged
- Focused
- Calm



**FEAR**

**STRESS**

**OVERWHELM**

# What is a “trigger?”

- Triggers are environmental stimuli
  - Sensory reminders of an event: Sound, sight, smell, touch, taste
- Responses to stimuli are conditioned
  - Not a conscious choice to behave certain way
- Cause emotional responses to neutral stimuli – brings back pieces of traumatic episode
- Brings back memory
  - Glimpse – enough to scare/startle/cause reaction
  - Re-experience – people literally believe they’re in danger

Megan Smith

# Triggers can be ANYTHING

- hair, clothes, \*uniform\*
- accent, voice tone, gender
- season, weather, holiday
- media (books, articles, television, news, entertainment)
- strangers seen in public,
- life developmental milestones, changes in relationship
- psychotherapy & recovery

# Empathy + Boundaries

# Ideas For A Safe Classroom: Create a Classroom Designed for Safety and Regulation

## Movement

- Rocking (taps into the energy of being safe)
- Pacing
- Standing Exercises
- Sitting Exercises
- Swinging
- Fitness Balls
- Movement Through Space
- Bilateral activities (biking, crawling, jump roping)
- Fidgets, Busy Box



# Classroom Regulation

## Sound

- Music
- Water Fountains
- White Noise Machines

## Animals

- Fish
- Hamsters

## Breaks

## Mindfulness

## Simplicity

## Lighting

## Food & Water

## Safety

## Yoga

## Breathing

## Exercise

## Co-Regulation

## Zones of Regulation: K-12

## Calming Corners



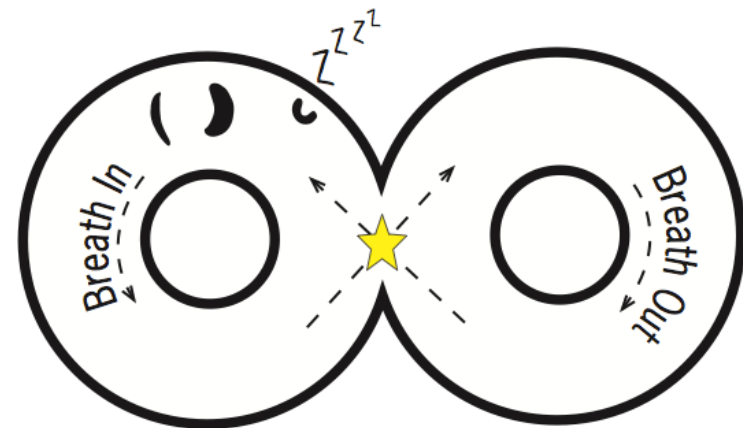
-Just Breathe Video

-BCI



# Breathing Techniques

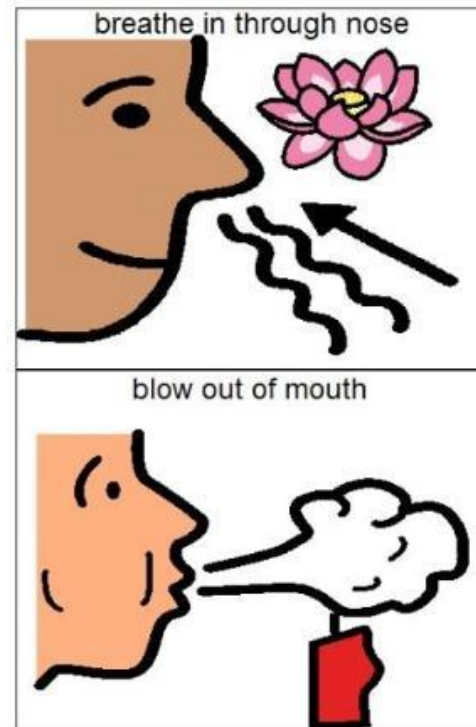
## Lazy 8 Breathing



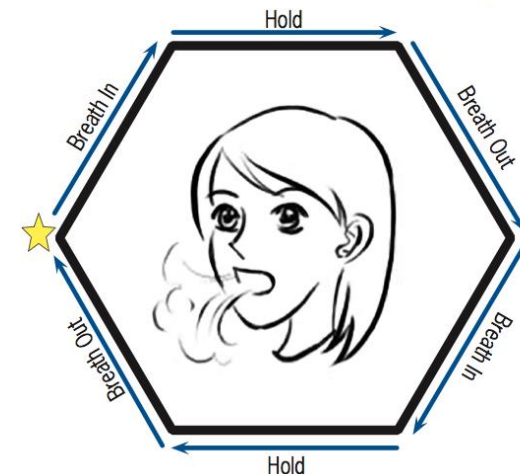
Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.



## The Six Sides of Breathing



-Leah Kuypers

# Co-Regulation for Teachers & Students

“Motivation is more about regulation than about simply making a choice to succeed and following the rules.”

-Co-Regulation Handout

# The Zones of Regulation Framework

## THE ZONES OF REGULATION®

A CURRICULUM DESIGNED  
TO FOSTER SELF-REGULATION AND  
EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Written and Created by  
Leah M. Kuypers, MA Ed. OTR/L

Foreword and Selected Lessons by  
Michelle Garcia Winner



### What it IS

- A teaching tool
- A thinking framework
- A way to nurture development of skills
- Supportive in nature

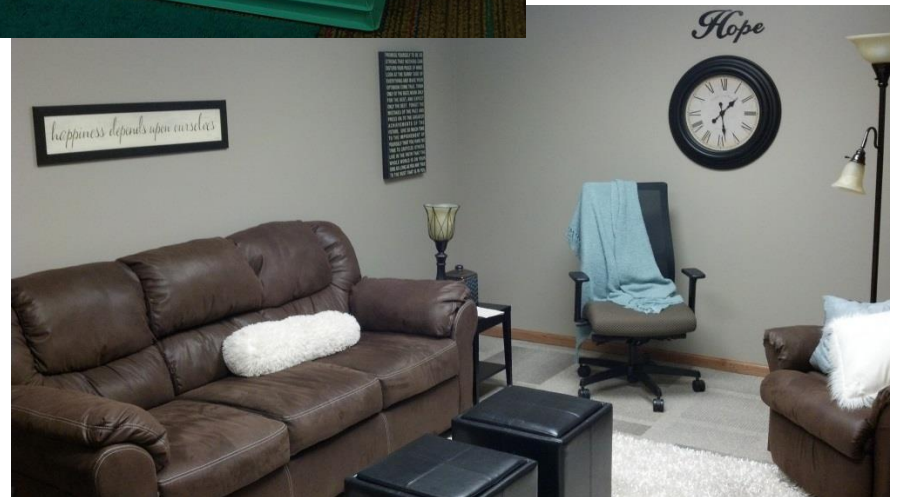
### What it ISN'T

- A discipline model
- A behavior approach
- A way to shame for negative behavior
- Punitive in nature

# Four ZONES used to describe levels of alertness and feelings:

- Blue Zone: Sad, Sick, Tired, or Bored.
- Green Zone: In Control, Calm, Happy, Ready to Learn.
- Yellow Zone: More Intense Emotions & States but able to maintain control, Worried, Frustrated, Silly, Excited, Scared, Overwhelmed.
- Red Zone: Out of Control, Elated, Angry, Wild, or Terrified.

# Calming Corners or Regulation Station



# **Staying Regulated During the Moment**

- **Mantras**
- **Anchor Yourself**
- **Body Scan**
- **Re-Interpreting the Behavior**

# Self-Regulation ???

“I am currently out of the office but will probably reply immediately due to self-regulation inefficiency and a profound inability to say no.”

“I am currently off contract for the summer. I will answer your email promptly because I have no life. Thanks for understanding.”

# Responding Instead of Reacting

## Traditional Reactions

- “It’s not that difficult”
- “Stop Crying”
- “You need to learn to be responsible”
- “Go to the principal’s office”

## Trauma Informed Responses

- “I need to know how hard this is for you”
- “It’s okay to feel”
- “Let’s chunk this down so it is more manageable”
- “I’m here. You’re not in trouble”



# Ideas For A Safe Classroom

## Develop Relationships

“They may forget what you said- but they will never forget how you made them feel.” -Carl W. Buehner

-BCI

-Empathy vs. Sympathy Video

# Develop Relationships

Never underestimate the power of the relationship in the academic environment

“When working with trauma-impacted students, we must reach their hearts before we can reach their heads.”

# Develop Relationship

- Leave a note on the student's desk
- Express attitude of “I care about you as a person”
- Listen, give them a voice
- Scaffold them up with supports and resources they need
- Give each student personal attention

# **Ideas For A Safe Classroom**

**Involve Parental Support,  
Not Parental Fear**

# Classroom Strategies

- **Affirmations**
- **Mantras**
- **Repetition**
- **Continual Support**

-BCI

# Affirmations

## What Can I Say To Myself?

### Instead of...

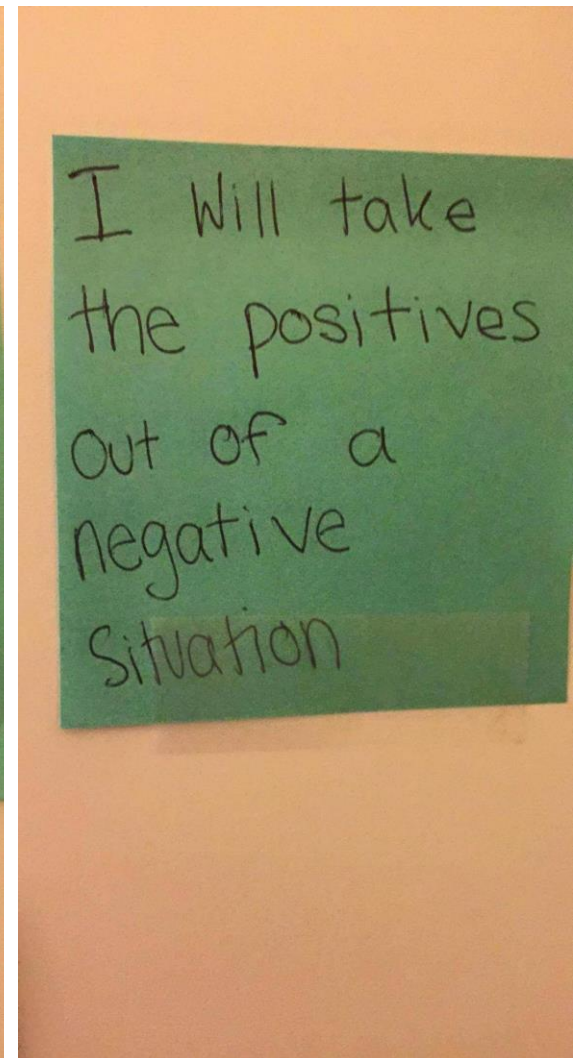
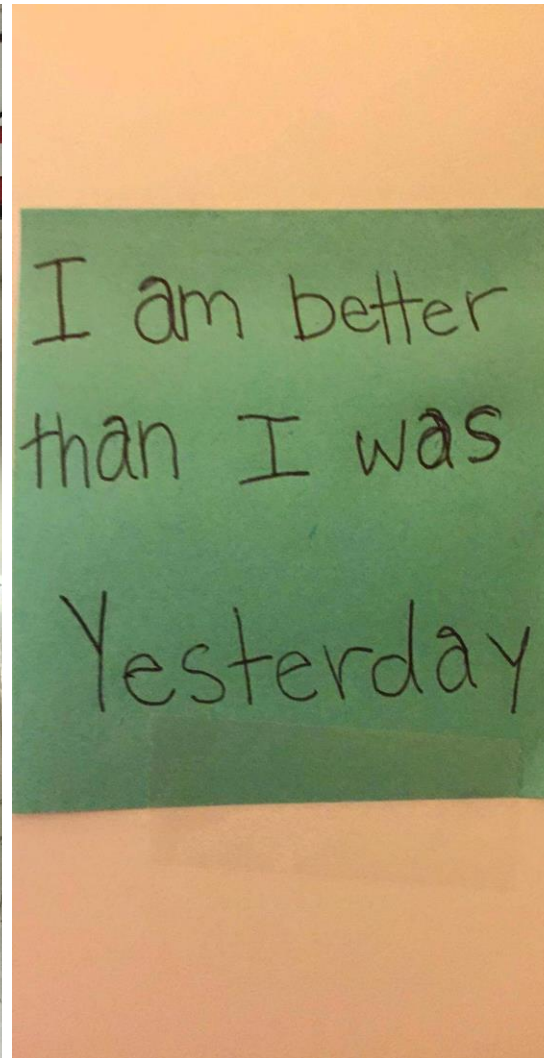
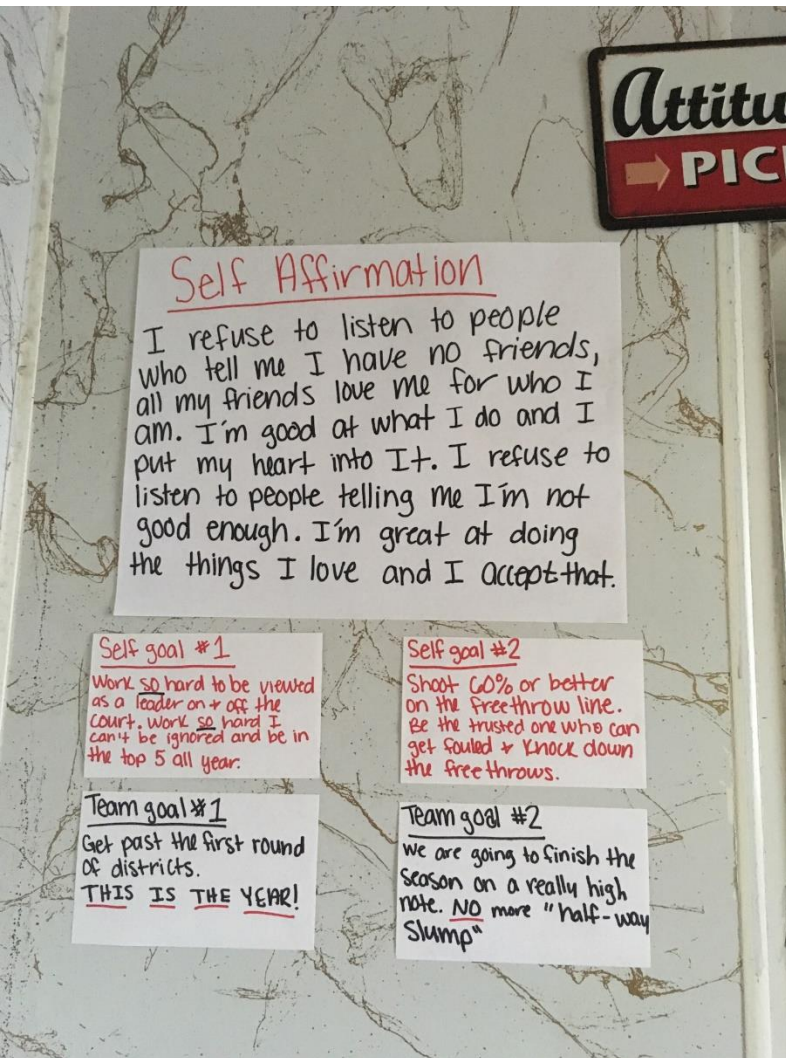
- 1) I'm not good at this.
- 2) I'm awesome at this.
- 3) I give up.
- 4) This is too hard.
- 5) I can't make this any better.
- 6) I made a mistake.

### Try Thinking...

- 1) What am I missing?
- 2) I'm on the right track!
- 3) I'll use some of the strategies we've learned.
- 4) This make take some time and effort.
- 5) I can always improve, so I'll keep trying.
- 6) Mistakes help me to learn better.

-Jessica's Video

# Affirmations



# Mantras

**Teacher:** “Who’s safe?”

**Child:** “I am safe.”

**Teacher:** “All of the time or some of the time?”

**Child:** “All of the time!”

**Teacher:** “Who is in charge to keep you safe?”

**Child:** You (the teacher) are in charge to keep me safe.”

**Teacher:** “All of the time or some of the time?”

**Child:** “All of the time!”



# SELF-CARE ACTIVITY



# Take Care of Self First

Oxygen  
mask on  
the plane



## What Will I Do For Self-Care?

-Trauma Stewardship Video

“I Don’t Have Time”

“ I Have to Focus on  
Academics and  
Standardized Tests”

# Youth Trauma Specific Interventions and Referrals

- Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)-  
Ages 0-17
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)-  
Ages 18-25
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools  
(CB ITS)- Grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>
- Seeking Safety- Ages 13-25
- Trauma Trained Therapist

# **Child Abuse Reporting**

If you suspect or know of abuse,  
you must report to Child  
Protective Services at  
1-800-652-1999

# Every Child Needs A Champion

Rita Pierson :TED Talk



-Rita Pierson Video

# Thank-you, Evaluation

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“To the world, you may be just one person, but to one person, you just may be the world.”